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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we know that You exist. Every time we hear a baby cry or touch a leaf, we are reminded of Your presence in our world. Lord, continue to look with favor upon our Senators. Enable them to go from strength to strength as they strive to live in day-tight compartments. Guide them around the obstacles that hinder them from living for Your glory. As they strive to please You, empower them to stand for right and leave the consequences to You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable Jacky Rosen, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. ROSEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kate Elizabeth Heinzelman, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday's CPI report told Americans what they already knew all too well: The disastrous effects of Washington Democrats' spending binge last year still have our economy in a vice grip.

Year-on-year, inflation has hit 9.1 percent for the first time since the fall-out of the Carter administration. And the signs are inescapable. Price hikes on everything from food to fuel to housing are setting new multidecade highs.

A shopper out in Oregon told a reporter recently she doesn't buy beef anymore. Here is what she said:

We kind of try to eat what we have while we have it.

Yesterday, we learned exactly what she and millions of Americans are up against: the fastest rising grocery prices since 1979.

In Nevada, the owner of a local diner says:

My concerns are that my food costs have escalated dramatically. I used to gut wrench about [raising menu prices] 2 or 3 percent. Now it is way more than that just to keep my doors open.

Yesterday's report says he is not alone. Nationwide prices for food outside the home haven't risen this fast since back in 1981. And this new reality is especially frustrating for those working to help.

As the head of one South Dakota food bank put it, "The donation load seemed to lighten up. . . . When we give out food boxes, they're not as full as they used to be."

Right as working families are struggling the most, so are the organizations trying to help them. Just one more cruel twist of Washington Democrats' runaway inflation.

One of the first and most painful consequences of the Biden administration's failed policies have been the soaring costs of energy. Remember, on their party's watch, the cost of heating a home rose by double-digit percentages last winter. Electricity prices climbed at their fastest rate since 2006. Prices at the gas pump have doubled since President Biden took office. One Pennsylvania woman said that ever since her heating bill skyrocketed last winter, she has had to scale back her spending big time. Here is what she had to say:

I need to hide under my bed and save every dollar I can.

And in Maryland, one retiree reports that "skyrocketing gas prices mean that visits to the local library—about 5 miles round trip—no longer feel free."

From day one, the Biden administration has worked overtime to make it

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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harder to produce the most affordable and reliable forms of energy that Americans rely on at home. Now, as their radical climate agenda takes its toll on domestic production, millions of Americans are facing the possibility—listen to this—of summer blackouts.

The heartland, the West, and the Southwest face the highest risks. The people of Arizona and Nevada, for example, are already at what experts call “elevated risk” for this summer.

Are Arizonans and Nevadans clamoring for a new tax hike on natural gas electricity on top of everything else? I doubt it. Are they desperate to double down on the very unreliable green sources that set us up for these blackouts in the first place? I don't think so.

Our electric grid is overburdened already, but Democrats apparently want to strain it even more by eliminating the most reliable sources of energy we have, all the while spending hundreds of billions on schemes that depend on Chinese minerals, components, and supply chains.

Trading American energy independence for less reliable sources that depend on forced child labor and foreign producers with questionable environmental standards—really, is this what our colleagues think will usher in a big transition to green daydreams?

Washington Democrats are the only ones who would define higher energy costs and lower reliability as a victory. Real-life Americans know that higher costs and rolling blackouts are just two more symptoms of a failed government with failed leadership pushing failed policies.

Working families are still reeling from the time Democrats decided to spend us into inflation. They have got no appetite for being taxed into recession.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Madam President, on another matter, all week long I have been discussing the historic Supreme Court term that wrapped up last month. Over the course of several months, a textualist and originalist majority issued the most consequential victories for our Constitution since the Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

It was the best Supreme Court term in generations.

The Court corrected one of the worst moral and legal mistakes of the 20th century and returned power to the American people to implement popular and commonsense protections for unborn life and bring America back inside the global mainstream.

The Court handed down two historic wins for religious liberty, rolling back decades of infringement on the rights of Americans to worship and to raise families as they choose.

The Court strengthened the rights of law-abiding Americans to defend themselves outside the home in a resounding reaffirmation of the Second Amendment.

And the Court took a huge bite out of the unconstitutional administrative state and rolled back a big part of the Obama-Biden administration's totally illegal Clean Power Plan. With electricity prices skyrocketing on Democrats' watch, experts warning about impending summer blackouts, and more pain at the gas pump, the last thing Americans need is a holy war on fossil fuels that Congress never actually authorized.

The Court's decision in *West Virginia v. EPA* was a victory for working Americans and a reminder that the power to make law rests with their elected Representatives, not unelected bureaucrats.

But, today, I want to talk about something that runs even deeper than these historic rulings. As in any high-profile term, last month, the Court arrived at rulings that some politicians and some citizens liked more than others. Goodness knows that I have been disappointed in my share of Supreme Court rulings over the years, including some extremely consequential cases. Going back decades, there have been countless times when the Federal judiciary has left conservative citizens feeling every bit as disappointed in a particular outcome as far-left activists seem to feel right now. After all, the courts don't exist to enforce any one political ideology or policy agenda. The Justices' sacred job is to follow the written text of our laws and Constitution wherever it may lead them and let the chips fall where they may.

But there is something funny. I can't recall any time when our side, the right-of-center side of America, engaged in prolonged mob protests outside judges' private family homes. The attacks on the judiciary, on this fundamental institution of our society, seem to only run in one direction.

A few weeks ago, the Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader teamed up to issue a, frankly, unhinged statement. Most of the top Democrats in the country followed suit. Their reckless statements did not stop—indeed, barely even took a pause—when a disturbed leftwing person very nearly tried to assassinate a sitting Justice.

Frankly, the inflammatory tone of all of these attacks echoed the furious attacks on the Court, ironically, from the Democrats of the day after *Brown* overturned *Plessy* back in 1954. We are hearing absurd calls from the far left to have Congress politically persecute individual Justices because of their views of the law. They want to take off Lady Justice's blindfold and scare the Court into becoming politically partial.

Well, this didn't start now. Sadly, it has been years in the making. Along the path to this moment, the far left has stoked reckless rhetoric, and we have heard it from Democrats in elected office, like in the amicus brief from several Senators who declared the Court unwell—unwell—and warned it

to “heal itself before the public demands it be ‘restructured.’” In other words, do what we want you to do or we will change the makeup of the Court—or in the named threats from the Democratic leader himself that sitting Justices would—listen to this—“pay the price” for ruling in ways he didn't like. He said that over in front of the Supreme Court.

We have spent a year and a half now hearing Democrats say over and over and over again that a core principle of democracy is accepting the legitimacy of an outcome when you don't like it. Sound familiar? Our colleagues need to practice what they preach.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whips.

INFLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the Republican leader comes to the floor regularly with heartfelt concerns about the burdens facing America's families. I share those concerns. I think all Senators share those concerns. Inflation is a tough thing to deal with in the family budget. I go home to Illinois to see the price of gasoline at the gas stations. I shop in my local stores and see what it costs for the basics. I understand that, although it is an inconvenience for me, for many people, it is a hardship. So for the Republican leader to come to the floor and remind us of that problem which we are facing in our economy is certainly understandable.

Yesterday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the Consumer Price Index for the month of June. It came in higher than anticipated. Prices rose by 1.3 percent in June, and when compared to June 2021, prices are up 9.1 percent—the fastest year over year increase since 1981. When you dive into the data, you will see that prices jumped within categories that affect almost every household: food, energy, rent, gas. We know, for many American families, a break can't come soon enough.

So what are we going to do about it, give speeches? There are a lot of opportunities for us to do that, for the Republican leader and the Democratic leader—or are we going to do something?

The Democrats think it is time to do something, and we have picked one category of cost that is particularly important to American families. It is the category of cost that not only is a life-and-death issue but that determines the cost of health insurance for families. We know that because we are told by the largest health insurers in the United States that the cost of prescription drugs is driving the cost of premiums for health insurance, so Democrats have decided to tackle this directly.

Credit should go to our Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, who is in negotiation now on prescription drug pricing with Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia. I have been skeptical of the outcome of that negotiation, but I am beginning to be encouraged by what I